

# Musician in tune with future

**By Cristina Stebbins**  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Alex Nguyen is one cool cat. Making his way through the University of North Florida Music Department, the senior music major has been amazing audiences for the better part of a decade.

Nguyen holds the jazz trumpet chair in the department's Ensemble I. His talent won him the 2005 International Trumpet Guild Jazz Competition.

"Nguyen's sense of style is remarkably mature," said Dr. Randy Tinnin, an associate professor of trumpet. "His improvisation has been described as 'thoughtful,' 'mature,' and he's been called 'an old man's soul in a young man's body' by visiting artists."

Savannah-born Nguyen started playing jazz trumpet when he was 12 after a friend of his sister's told him he looked like a trumpet player. Some of his greatest influences are Miles Davis, Lee Morgan, Clifford Brown, Freddie Hubbard and Art Farmer.

After attending a concert in Savannah where UNF music professors performed, he made the decision to apply to UNF. After being accepted to other schools around the country, including several in New York, he decided UNF was the best school for him to "re-learn" how to play the jazz trumpet.

"The university is definitely one of the best," Nguyen said. "A lot of great musicians have come through here."

Now with several performances under his belt, including the Jacksonville Jazz Festival and Savannah Onstage International Arts Festival, he is ready to take on New York. After graduating from UNF in May, he will either attend Queens or Purchase College for the fall semester.

"[Nguyen] holds a strong grip on the tradition of the past, yet always strives to push the music in new directions," said Alex LoRe, Nguyen's fellow band member and sophomore jazz education major. "His love for music combined with his dedication will lead him to become an inspiration for the upcoming generation of jazz musicians."

Nguyen sees a great future for himself, too. He said he hopes his musical growth will bring him a shared stage with some of the greatest jazz musicians to-date. Somewhere down this musical road, he hopes to return what has been given to him and become a teacher or mentor to young, aspiring musicians like himself.

Nguyen's senior recital is scheduled April 27 in the Fine Arts Building.

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